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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/617,590	07/18/2000	Sha Ye	PORTP007	8637

26541 7590 02/17/2004

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EXAMINER

JASMIN, LYNDIA C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3627

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/617,590

Applicant(s) **SW**

YE ET AL.

Examiner

Lynda Jasmin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 July 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 July 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Specification***

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: in the description of the drawings, Figure 6 illustrates --a sample rating curve-- not "a sample volume discount curve". On page 14, at line 23, the "retreieved" should be --retrieved--.

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 2-6, 17-29, 33, 35 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 2, at line 1, the recitation "said volume discount scheme" lacks proper antecedent basis. Further, the recitation "wherein said volume discount scheme comprises one or more rate step points and two or more tiers" renders the claim indefinite since it appears not to be part of the limitations of parent claim 1. Therefore the Examiner interprets claims 2-6, 18-31 as broadly and indefinitely recited.

In claims 11 and 12, at line 1, the recitation "calculating the cost" lacks proper antecedent basis.

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In claim 17, at line 1, the recitation "rating the event" lacks proper antecedent basis. renders the claim indefinite since it is unclear if it is rating the billing event or some other event.

In claim 33, at line 1, the recitation "the cost to a source" lacks proper antecedent basis.

In claims 35 and 36, at line 1, the recitation "said volume discount scheme" lacks proper antecedent basis. Further, the recitation "wherein said volume discount scheme includes a plurality of rating curves" renders the claim indefinite since it appears not to be part of the limitations of parent claim 1. Therefore the Examiner interprets claims 35 and 36 as broadly and indefinitely recited.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-4, 7-13, 16-22 and 25-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hanagan et al. (2001/0056362 A1).

As best understood, Hanagan et al. a computer implemented method and system embodied in a computer readable medium for rating a billing event in a real time

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accounting system with the steps of receiving a billing event for an account (via customer billing manager 18), retrieving current usage information for the account (event rater and pricer ERP 16), and rating the billing event upon receiving the event, according to the billing event, the current usage information, and a usage dependent rating scheme (as disclosed in box 0079).

Hanagan et al. further discloses a volume discount scheme comprises one or more rate step points (via price plans associated a number of discount per call) and two or more tiers (for example, there can be one tax rate for voice and another for fax), the event having an associated event quantity (via combining charges from multiple customers for accounts for volume discounts), and determining one or more rates applying to the event (based on volume), calculating a cost of the event and updating the account (box 0214). Hanagan et al. further discloses updating the account with the billing event (via customer billing manager CBM 18), providing a cost of the event to a source of the event (via cost tracking such as internal billing, invoicing and reporting) on a web page (via since user can view documents online), and calculating the cost is performed during the rating or after the rating is performed (via the event rater and pricer).

Hanagan et al. further discloses exactly one rate applies to the event (via single tier per service), wherein rating the event includes determining the exactly one rate responsive to the current accumulated usage information and calculating a cost of the event (box 0214). Further, the one or more rate step points are responsive to a number of events (such as number of phone calls made) during a period (box 0216). The rate

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step points are responsive to an amount of usage (volume such as duration) of a resource associated with the event wherein the duration is minutes of a phone call (via connect time). The amount of usage may further be a number of items purchased (box 0082). Hanagan et al. further discloses that a cost of the event is determined responsive to a sum of the current accumulated usage information and the event quantity (box 0196). Further, a table is used in determining the cost (residential customer object and corporate customer object).

Hanagan et al. further discloses performing a look-forward into a rating scheme responsive to the account information comprising current accumulated usage information (via creating 156 recurring charge events in advance of a bill run to speed up the processing of billing) and sending marketing information to a user associated the account responsive to performing the look-forward (via helping in responding to customer inquiries which includes invoices, statements, marketing literature, and shipments). Hanagan et al. further discloses volume discount scheme including a plurality of rating curves (via the pricing structure object 66), including selecting one or more of the plurality of rating curves responsive to information about the event (box 0108).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 14, 15, 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hanagan et al.

Although Hanagan et al. does not explicitly disclose sending an email message to user, or the number of events is a number of content items (news articles or quotes) viewed, however, Hanagan et al. discloses a billing event that is related to all type of telecommunication services including electronic transaction such as wireless. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided communicating by sending email message and viewing an online content since such is well used in wireless telecommunication services, and the Examiner takes Official Notice as such.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

8. Claims 5 and 6 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

9. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art made of record fails to disclose if the event quantity is less than a tier reservoir, adjusting an account balance responsive to a current tier and the event quantity and if the event quantity is not less than the tier reservoir performing: calculating a portion cost for a portion of the event quantity equal to the current tier reservoir, adjusting an account balance by the portion cost, adjusting the remaining

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event quantity by the current tier reservoir; incrementing the current tier, setting the current tier reservoir to be a distance to a next step point from the incremented current tier, repeating said steps of calculating, adjusting the account balance, adjusting the remaining event quantity, incrementing and setting until the event quantity is less than the tier reservoir, then performing: calculating a final portion cost of the remaining event quantity responsive to the current tier, adjusting the account balance by the final portion cost.

### ***Conclusion***

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Eder discloses an order discount schedule. Vulcan et al. discloses call managing center with tariff data of service provider. Farhat et al. discloses a billing and settlement of service access transactions in a multi-party environment. Steele et al. discloses advance airtime management interface between telecommunication networks.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lynda Jasmin whose telephone number is (703) 305-0465. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday (8:00-5:30) alternate Fridays off.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert P Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The fax phone



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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Lynda Jasmin  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3627  
2/6/04

lj